

DECOLONIZATION OR NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT?

Some Lessons to be Drawn from Kenya's Successful Independence Movement (1945—1963)

by

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One most conspicuous and substantial process in the new historical period beginning at the end of World War II was the disintegration of traditional colonial empires, the cessation of formally expressed relations of protectorate-colonial subordination. Old states, buried in oblivion, were reborn, new, so far non-existing ones emerged, and all these comprise a considerable proportion of the world's territory and population. Peoples having become independent recently represent in many a respect autonomous forces which can no longer be left out of consideration. It is one primary task of modern history to study the laws governing the movement of this factor which in all probability will increasingly affect the progress of entire mankind.

There have been, and still exist, immense differences between countries belonging to the one-time colonial and semi-colonial category — in respect of their level of economic, social and political development, their role in world economy, the population number, and the degree of dependence; yet in some fields — decisive exactly in respect of international relations — we see a domination of identities and similarities. The conditions of political and economic dependence on alien powers, and the aspirations aimed at, or resulting in, the liquidation of such dependence belong here first of all. The following is an attempt at studying the directly acting*, omnipresent and principal components of the process leading to independence. Which are, in given circumstances, these components? On the one side is colonialism and its manifestation: decolonization; on the other side is anticolonialism and its manifestation: national liberation movements. The subject of this study is the presentation of nearly two decades that preceded the independence of an African country, Kenya.

Why did the choice fall on Kenya? Because in this East African country the characteristic features of former colonial (mostly African)

* Other factors are also involved here indirectly, and decisively as concerns the historical process as a whole, such as the growing influence of the socialist camp, the rivalry between leading capitalist powers, etc.

territories took shape in a concentrated form and at the same place. Because the British colonial doctrine of indirect rule, the conspicuous identities of the ethnic and class structure of society, the particular role of the white settlers and the immigrants from India, the social stratification and the tribal-lingual diversity of the Africans, the armed and parliamentary way of the liberation movement, as well as a few other sets of important problems can be studied here in their well-developed form and correlations. But what we wanted to ascertain first of all was this: what was the role of the two forces, in the process leading to independence, i.e. of decolonization and the national liberation movement, and what relationship existed between them.

The economic and class conditions of Kenya from World War II to the attainment of independence

The rate of industrial and agricultural production was accelerated after the war. The pre-war production value of agriculture was surpassed by about 40% between 1955 and 1958. The monocultural pattern increased, and this growth — like everywhere in Trans-Saharan Africa — resulted almost without exception in an increase of export produce, while food production decreased in many cases.¹ This process was particularly drastic in Kenya's reserves, where the conditions of cultivation of the underfed African population were heavily deteriorated² while 90 per cent of the big plantations were left uncultivated.³ Foreign trade assumed a determining role in the realization of the national income. As concerns the correlation between the national income and the volume of foreign trade, the following statistics are available: at the end of the 50's, the per capita national income in East Africa was 65 dollars (US), per capita exports amounted to 21, imports to 20 dollars.⁴ The economic importance of the planters resulted exactly from the fact that 70 per cent of the exports were of agricultural nature, and that agricultural produce was provided first of all by them.⁵

The principal products were, and still are, coffee, sisal, cereals, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, sugar cane and cotton. According to data from 1956, coffee, tea and sisal accounted for more than 63% of Kenya's total export value, within which coffee alone amounted to 47.1%.⁶

In Kenya's backward economic life, based one-sidedly on agricultural exports, room was only left for the processing industry which — mainly as a manifestation of the settlers' interest — underwent considerable development, and its share in the national income amounted to 13.5% in 1957. This is more than three times the figure in neighbouring Tanganyika and Uganda, and is one index of Kenya's special position in East Africa.

The majority of the Africans, amounting to 96% of the entire population, were tillers of the soil and lived mainly in the rather restricted reserves.

In 1897 the entire territory of Kenya was declared property of the British crown, and the robbery of land, i.e. the sellout at ridiculously low prices of land forming the "property of the crown", was started at that time. In 1921 the British High Court of Justice took a definite principled stand in the land question of Kenya and, making reference to the "Crown Land Ordinance" of 1915 and the colonial status of Kenya which came into force in 1920, declared that "the natives are tenants at will of the Crown on the land actually occupied."⁷ The tendency to form gigantic estates was supported officially. A special permit was required only for purchases over 100 acres (400 hectares).

Parallel with the organization of the colonial administration in Kenya (the "stabilization"), the inflow of European settlers grew. While in the years immediately following World War I their number was less than six thousand, this figure was doubled by 1926. And in 1938 nearly twenty thousand farmers and owners of big estates lived in the most fertile White Highland.

The economic power of the settlers was based on their immense lands. The entire colonial history of Kenya is centred round the land problem. The appropriation of land, involving the deprivation of land, proceeded by leaps and bounds as is shown by the figures below:⁸

Year	Appropriated land in 1000 hectares
1900 - 1927	1880
1931	2558
1938	2800

These appropriation data relate solely to the White Highland, but 4/5 of the country's population live here.

The development process of the big plantation farms was very rapid, and reflected at the same time the rate of land robbery. The first mammoth estate developed in 1903 in Kikuyuland near Nairobi. The most important of these big estates were owned by the monopoly companies "East African Sisal Estates", "East African Sisal Plantations", "Kilifi Plantations" and "Consolidated Sisal Estates of East Africa."

It was a characteristic contrast that while the European immigrants left 90 p.c. of their excellent lands uncultivated, the herds of the Africans perished in the immediate vicinity of empty territories declared "protected". The population density in reserves with cultivable land was extremely high, in the Baluhia, and in some Kikuyu reserves, the population per square kilometre was six hundred, even thousand.⁹

The marking out of reserves was started very soon. A decision was passed in 1904 for creating this institution which reduced the Africans to the status of second-class citizens in their own country. Otherwise the lands of these reserves were also managed as the property of the British crown and the Africans occupying them were only granted a lease.

The manpower requirement of the European farms, mainly of the big plantations, was met not only by large-scale land robbery, but also by taxation. The governor Sir Percy Girouard stated several times in the early 1900's that taxation is the only efficient means for forcing the natives to abandon their reserves and to look for a job.¹⁰

No official statistics were collected, and could not be collected, because the planters paid different wages in often altogether unsurveyable ways, but according to generally held opinion the average wages paid to farm hands before World War II were 14 to 20 shillings. And with cruel purposefulness these wages were not raised because the planters were anxious to keep production costs on a low level, even if a raise would have been justified as a result of increasing productivity. The above-cited Sir Percy Girouard said that a raise of wages would decrease and not increase manpower supply, because in case of higher wages the hut-tax or capitation tax of clans or tribes could be earned by fewer workers outside the village.¹¹

Land robbery and the closely connected taxation were not enough to satisfy the needs of the colonizers. Beginning at the partial consolidation of their rule, up to their dislodgement, they made use of forced labour in the strict sense of the term.

Immediately after World War II, 50 000 square kilometres of partially barren and semi-arid land were shared by 6 million African peasants, as opposed to the 60 000 Europeans who were in possession of 16 700 square kilometres of the excellent soil of White Highland.

Looking at the distribution of land after World War II, we see striking differences: the per capita share of Africans was less than 1 hectare, while the average landed property of the Europeans was 2 400 hectares. The total territory owned by Europeans was held by 3 500 farmers and 600 companies. Discontent and anger were increased by the fact that the deprivation of land was not stopped. Even in 1948 more than 1000 acres of land were confiscated. The conditions of subsistence were further deteriorated by forcing the Africans to produce for exports and prohibiting the production of maize, wheat, beans and potatoes.¹² This situation differed from the preceding period where it was exactly the production for exports that the settlers monopolized. The explanation lies in the increasing influence of foreign trade monopolies which made efforts to squeeze out still more coffee and tea from the colony while disregarding completely the adverse consequences of one-crop farming. But the decisive share of the European minority persisted throughout even so. It is illustrative of this situation that the production of coffee — the country's principal export article — depended decisively on the European plantations even in the late fifties (1958–59): they produced 19 250 tons of the total annual output of 22 500 tons.

By 1960 the wage labourers in Kenya amounted to 361 000 men,¹³ This is a rather high percentage, but its true significance can be illustrated in the knowledge of the special circumstances which, by the way, are similar nearly all over the continent.

Mention must be made of several inhibiting factors in Trans-Saharan Africa: almost 90% of the workers are migrant workers¹⁴ part of whom work only until they earn the amount of the levied taxes; only a small proportion (25%) is working in industries; owing to the industrial structure, no large factory proletariat exists; there is a close relationship with the tribe, the village; the degree of organization is low.

These factors are to a certain degree counterbalanced by the permanent influx to towns. For example, in 1961 the number of inhabitants grew by 70 000 in Nairobi. Nor must the fact be neglected that the migrant workers had a disruptive effect with their mere presence on Kenya's traditional social units, and became the carriers of new ideas quasi without being aware of it. The proportion of permanent settling in big towns grew, although this is valid in a general sense only: 48 p.c. of the workers in Nairobi, 40 p.c. in Mombasa, do not stay with the same employer more than one year. In 1957 the African urban labourers received 82 s. a month (plus 21 s. housing allowances) in Mombasa; 85 s. a month (plus 22 s. housing allowances) in Nairobi.¹⁵ The high rate of unemployment (affecting one third of the workers) helped keeping the wages on the lowest level, but towns and industries were attractive nevertheless, partly because this was the only sphere with open jobs, partly because the wages were relatively higher here. The term "relatively" appears clearly from these data: Africans employed in industries were paid 5.37 per cent of the wages for white workers, and 2.95 p.c. of the latter wages in agriculture.¹⁶

To give a proper definition of the class structure of the African population after World War II is difficult. The traditional leading stratum had lost its importance. The British administration realizing the policy of "indirect rule", and employing also Africans, may be left out of consideration here in view of the fact that only a minor proportion of the traditional leaders was incorporated and only the lowest positions were filled with them (location chiefs, tax collectors, etc.).

The bourgeoisie and intelligentsia of African stock was small in number and weak.

The majority of the lower middle class and of the middle class was formed by the Asian and Arab immigrants, and their class relations were made complicated by their lingual, religious and cultural foreignness. Thus their alliance with the African forces of independence was not a firm one throughout, and in many cases the function of this alliance was only to extort for themselves more privileges from the Kenya government.

The actual ruling class altogether consisted of foreigners. This is not to say, of course, that all European immigrants belonged to the ruling class — the difference between owners of big estates and 200-hectare farmers was obvious — but even a white foreman or farmer who lived in relatively poor circumstances regarded the Africans as his chief enemy, considering that — with good reason by the way — his better living conditions rest on work screwed out of the Africans.

The population of African stock was essentially and on the whole interested in attaining independence because the African bourgeoisie and "elite" had no say in Kenya on account of the large number of settlers. As Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania put it: "for them the other party is colonial power."¹⁷ As concerns the period under survey, the opinion of J. Woddis is acceptable: the development of classes among the Africans is still rudimentary, their interests are common, being independence and unity whereby the principal characteristic is radicalism.¹⁸ The common interests based on the underdevelopment of classes constituted the fundamental condition for the unified anti-imperialistic struggle, and this unity till the attainment of independence proved to be stronger in entire Trans-Saharan Africa than, say, tribal or religious divisions.

Also the proletariat belonged to the people's united front. As follows from its aforesaid characteristics, it had a relationship, more organic than the European with the peasantry that accounted for 90 p.c. of the population. Colonial history-writing does not take into account the role of the working class, which is not surprising; but there are theoreticians of the national liberation movements who contrast the working class with the peasantry, and regard the latter as the sole carrier of the struggle. According to F. Fanon, "in colonial territories, the proletariat represents the most favoured stratum... the proletariat can lose nothing in the capitalist countries... In colonial countries the proletariat can lose everything... They form the bourgeois stratum of the colonized peoples."¹⁹ We have mentioned the living conditions of the Kenyan proletariat (approximately 100 s. monthly wages, one third unemployed, racial discrimination by paying them 5.37% of the white workers' wages, etc.) and these facts do not support the ideas about a "favoured" stratum. The tremendous fluctuation itself speaks against this allegation. We must ask why the workers do not stay in the towns if two thirds of the agricultural workers — according to the data of a respectable committee²⁰ — do not earn even the living wages? Also the struggles and achievements of the emerging Kenyan working class contradict Fanon's thesis. Yet it is acceptable that the basis of the Kenyan national liberation movement was the peasantry²¹. As Colleb, one participant of the liberation movement said it is the land question that produces all political frictions in Kenya.

Economic exploitation and discrimination were closely connected in this period with the deprivation of civic and political rights. Management of the Kenya colony and protectorate did not change substantially after World War II. The administration was headed by a governor with extremely wide powers who was appointed by the British government. The composition of the Council of Ministers, of the Executive Council and of the Legislative Council co-operating with the governor showed the complete outlawry of the African population clearly. Up to 1944, the most important Legislative Council had not one African member, and there were only 4 appointed African members among the other 38

1952. In accordance with the policy of division, the Asians held 5 memberships, the Arabs 2, i.e. the representation of the non-European minorities in the Legislative Council was in striking contradiction to the ethnic and correlated class distribution of the population. In 1962 there were only 66 700 Europeans among a population of 8 676 000; the number of Asians was 178 000, of Arabs 38 600.²² The representation of the Africans was similar also on the lower level of government agencies, and we may add that also the European courts, hotels, schools, restaurants, residential quarters, theatres and movies contributed to rendering the Africans second-class citizens in every field. The reserves were not only of economic importance — for settling and forcing to work the Africans deprived of their lands — they also had a political meaning. This appears from the fact that special “locations” were marked out for them also in towns.

Shockingly poor health and cultural conditions resulted from the 50 years of the undisturbed “civilizatory” process. In 1956, there were only 613 doctors and 583 nurses in the country, which means that some 100 000 people had one doctor, and if we compare this situation with the afore-mentioned striking class differences within the population — i.e. that the health provision of white settlers was of higher standards than in Europe — it is easy to see why cholera, syphilis and tuberculosis decimated the population unhindered. (8000 people died of these diseases every year). Only 18 p.c. of the Africans in the schooling age attended school, and even these for no more than two or three years.²³

The relations between the immigrant European ruling class and the Africans became tense rapidly. Antagonism was undeniable and evident. What contacts, if any, could there develop between these two classes is illustrated — more realistically illustrated than by any lengthy discussion or statistics — by a Swahili practical grammar which saw its third edition in 1963. It is one of the last lessons, a dialogue, whose text represents the ultimate aim of the curriculum:²⁴

Bwana (= master, European): “Good morning.”

Mtu (= man, African): “Good morning.”

B: “What do you want?”

M: “I want a job as a house-servant.”

B: “Are you familiar with this kind of job?”

M: “Certainly, I have long done it.”

B: “Let me see your identity card and your workbook.” (The man hands them over, the master looks at them.)

B: “Not bad, you may try. Your duties: Bring in the tea at half past six in the morning every day, then bring down and put in order my clothes.”

M: “At what time shall I bring the clothes, Sir?”

B: “At seven.”

M: “I think this work is much to my liking.”

B: “Well, we are going to see. That’s all for the moment. I’ll give you more instructions tomorrow. Don’t be late tomorrow.”

Only very few people could become house-servants doing work "much to their liking". The African population of Kenya had got into disastrous circumstances. The British colonial rule for which they had shed their blood in the war, endangered their mere subsistence, despised their self-respect. The conclusion of P. Bowles is no overstatement: "One cannot help but think that it is better to live in Kenya as a wild beast than as a human being."²⁵

The union of forces fighting for independence

Following World War II, the pauperization trend of the entire African population increased in Kenya. All negative, destructive features of the colonial status were manifest increasingly, more intensely than ever before, while there was practically no sign at all of the much-asserted civilizational mission. In a new international situation which turned increasingly disadvantageous for imperialism, the country's economic progress, the emergence of a native bourgeoisie, intelligentsia and proletariat, made possible the unfolding of an extremely radical national liberation movement standing in the front of the struggles for independence on this continent. This phase of the movement was an outstanding and remarkable event of world-wide significance, because it was successful and attracted attention in a historical period during which the unrestricted influence of foreign powers still seemed unshakable in Trans-Saharan Africa. The more elastic British colonial policy, which registered considerable successes in the "masterly" solution of the decolonization process, appeared in its bare nature in Kenya and showed not much dissimilarity from the brutal French or Portuguese methods which were often condemned by the liberal British press.

When an attempt is made at objectivity in judging the struggles of this period, we deem it unnecessary to quote the pertinent conclusions of publicists and historians serving the interests of colonialism. These do not go beyond the slanders of Bishop Walter Carey's notorious work (*Crisis in Kenya*) and his biased attitude concerning "secret terrorist organization" for the extermination of the Europeans whose causative factors must allegedly be sought in the racial hatred of the Negroes (Henderson and Ph. Goodhart: *Mau Hunt in Kenya*, New York, 1958), in "too much" civilization for the Africans (G. Shephard: *They Wait in Darnkness*, Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau, London, 1960), or in the prohibition of certain pagan dances by missionaries. (Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies).²⁶ At the same time we must take issue also with tendencies of bourgeois historians which admit the rightfulness of the struggle of oppressed peoples, but try to present the Kenyan fight for liberation in most cases as the struggle of certain tribes against white settlers. This they do on the basis of the most conspicuous superficial symptoms, forgetting about the universal anti-imperialistic essential nature of these movements which followed from the above-outlined economic and social structure. To assert myths ab-

the Colonial Office, which tried to keep the balance between the Kikuyu and the settlers, was also in vogue. (Even the progressive minded C. Legum regards the contradiction between them as the principal characteristic of the period under survey.)²⁷

After World War II, the principal peculiarity of political life in Kenya was the fact that the so-called national organizations were born. The term "national" here differs from what would follow from the generally accepted concept of a nation as based mainly on European experience; what we call the national liberation movement in Trans-Saharan Africa is the common, anti-imperialistic movements of peoples and tribes living within borders marked out under the effect of various circumstances by the colonizers.

Safety measures taken during the war created peace on the surface of political life. But to accomplish this, means were resorted to which in themselves bore witness to the existence of a vigorous and wide-spread resistance. All kinds of political activity of the Africans were prohibited, and the leaders were exiled to Kapenguria.²⁸ The only organization permitted to operate was the Kikuyu Provincial Association which supported the war efforts, and which was headed by Harry Thuku who got increasingly isolated from his masses.

The new Governor of the country, Sir Philip Mitchell, in an effort to preserve the British and European settlers' positions, and paying due regard to the power relations that were changing all over the world and in Kenya alike, took a definite stand for the line of multi-racial partnership. Ensuring to the government broad possibilities of balancing, the principle of "partnership" was equivalent to the preservation of European hegemony. In Mitchell's proposals for the reorganization of government, tendencies for establishing self-government can be detected. The role of the Executive Council was amplified, and this was manifest in what was called the "Membership system". Namely the members of the Executive Council established departments for attending to their separated provinces, and the outlines of ministries to be born unfolded in these departments.

Since the "Membership system" rested on the "partnership" principle, it produced a wide resistance by the settlers even if its enforcement was envisaged for the distant future. What the settlers considered as feasible was only the introduction of a constitution of the South Rhodesian type. Their suspicion was not dispelled by their information about the governor's South African orange plantations, nor by his statement about White Highland: "We have made this our land by right of achievement."²⁹

The reborn African groupings (Kikuyu General Union, Luo Union) saw a step forward in these proposals at that time, and supported them. The Kenya African Study Union, holding its second Annual Delegates' Conference in February 1946, concerned itself with the question of soil erosion and the creation of an all-national organization.³⁰ This organization adopted the name Kenya African Union (KAU). The participants' activities were never restricted to the legal actions of the

party. New groups, more militant and conscious than ever before, emerged and identified themselves with the aims and methods of modern political struggles, but tried to connect them with traditional problems and forms. In this way the Kenya national movement — unlike in most countries of the continent — was never limited to the activities of a relatively narrow intellectual circle which is able to create a basis for itself but temporarily. The importance of intellectuals was considerable in Kenya as a matter of course, but in addition to Mathu, Gichuru, Ohanga, Awori, Otiende and Odede, who were active in intellectual careers, we may mention on the same footing former soldiers who became leaders, such as Kubai, Kaggia, Mugo, Kimathi and Methenge.³¹ The nearly ten thousand members of the British Kenya army, which were discharged after the war, represented a very important force because their majority stayed in towns (Mombasa, Nairobi) and formed the most agile and self-conscious part of the emerging proletariat. This is understandable because this stratum acquired qualifications in the army which were rare among Africans, and the intellectual horizon of these people was widened at the same time. The fact that the number of workers grew considerably during the war was a firm support for this stratum.³² People ordered to work on communal projects, and the migrant workers fleeing from narrow reserves for shorter or longer periods, made up half of the country's male population, and their flow, incessantly varying in its composition, provided a permanent link with the rural regions.

The government tried to make the best of the circumstance that the Mitchell proposals were till then received with approval by the Africans, and in April 1947 the draft constitution bearing the name of Griffith, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, was made public. This draft provided that in the Legislative Council a non-official majority must be created, and contained the principle of the "European parity" (the number of European settler representatives must be equal to the total number of the representatives of all other ethnic communities).³³ The rule of the European minority was guaranteed in this way, which appears also from the remarks of G. Bennett that there was "constant social contact between official and settler."³⁴

Yet the appointment of four Africans to the Legislative Council in 1947 did no longer satisfy the demands of the national movement, and sham concessions were of no avail at a time when the political consciousness of broad strata grew at an increasing rate. Governor Mitchell made a mistake in addition: he wanted to realize the compromise not with the most respectable leaders of the national movement in whom real power was vested. Upon his return in 1946, Jomo Kenyatta was welcomed as the undisputable leader of all African political groups because his scientific activities, particularly his role in the Vth Pan-African Congress, had gained universal appreciation. As the leading figure of Pan-Africanism, he was free from any suspicion of being the protector solely of Kikuyu interests. But even so, he offered his participation in the Legislative Council in vain in early 1947, because Mitchell decided to

the Local Native Council, a body of restricted local importance, would be the proper public field for him. But Kenyatta instead founded the Kenya Teachers' Training College in Githunguri, and this became the centre of African opposition. And from June on he increased his activities as the new president of the Kenya African Union.

The training college of Githunguri attracted like a magnet all young people eager to learn and growing conscious, and the independent schools successfully undertook a surprisingly rapid, centrally directed enlightenment work and mobilization of the masses. The training of teachers was equivalent to the training of novel-type national cadres, and the operations of the teachers' network actually played the part of a political party. It is not by chance that the first vehement clashes were closely connected with the Kenya Teachers' Training College.

In 1947 the workers of the Uplands Bacon Factory went on strike. The reason was that the management was not willing to dismiss a clerk who refused to contribute to the College fund. The police was called out, killed 3 strikers, and imprisoned the leaders. A part of the organizers were actively involved in the 1946 strikes of Mombasa, with Chege Kibachia among them, who is the founder of the militant trade union, the African Workers' Federation. The strike movement of the workers spread all over the country; the workers in military establishments the Kisumu railwaymen, and over fifty thousand Mombasa long-shoremen stopped working. The existence of constant town-village contacts appears from the circumstance that the masses working on big plantations joined them.³⁵

Also the degree of organization, the awakening to political consciousness of the demobilized soldiers grew. Although they are referred to as hooligans and robbers in the contemporary press of the settlers, their clear-cut political activity disproves this term. It was in September 1947 that the name of their organization — which had probably existed since the end of the war — became known: Kiama Kia Ndemwa Ithatu, which means the Party of the Three Initials. These three initials refer to the suppressed KCA, the Kikuyu Central Association.³⁶

The resistance flaring up in the peasant regions was still closely tied to the traditional forms, and in the riots of the Kikuyu reserves at the end of the year the again active Messianistic sects played an important role. The members of the Dini ya Jesu Kristo sect — which had grown out of the Watu wa Mungu sect founded and consolidated in the 30's in opposition to the established Church of Scotland — fought for the restoration of pre-colonial, "idyllic" conditions, revived deliberately ancient forms, donned animal skins, wore bows and arrows, and insisted on certain rites (some writers see a correlation between the old religious traditions of a sharp anti-British content and the title of Jomo Kenyatta's well-known book — *Facing Mount Kenya* — because the members of his sect offered their prayers prostrating themselves before mount Kenya).³⁷ On account of the striking similarity of these formal elements, the assumption that the direct popular roots of the Mau Mau must be

sought here seems to be correct. The December incident at Fort Hall had several victims.

Thus by the end of 1947 a broad alliance had come into being which comprised different strata and peoples of the Kenyan Africans, and which united the spontaneous, instinctive and often primitive actions of the masses with the purposeful aspirations of highly imaginative, professional revolutionists.

The government, having to face a universal resistance on the part of the Africans which extended to all socially important groups ranging from the peasants of the reserves to the nascent intelligentsia, had no choice but to take the road towards the realization of the proclaimed "partnership" policy. The powers of the Legislative Council were extended. In order to separate the emerging upper stratum of the African population, the foundation of a multi-racial United Kenya Club was envisaged. A bill was entered for taking the particulars on a uniform principle of all citizens. According to this bill, the authorities would have taken fingerprints (kipande) for registration. The fundamental importance of this was obvious: so far kipande was only applied to the Africans, illiterate in their majority, hence the extension of this measure was directed against racial discrimination, and, indirectly, against the hegemony of the European minority.

Kipande was unacceptable for the settlers, its proclamation produced a new wave of resistance in their circles. Under the slogan of protection of civic rights they created the Society of Civil Liberties, and stigmatized the bill as the manifestation of totalitarianism. Its rejection in the Legislative Council (February 1950) was a bad fiasco of the "partnership" principle: it was turned down by the settler representatives and the officially appointed civil servants together.³⁸ The platform of the Electors' Union — the only party of the European minority at that time — made public in September 1949 did not support Mitchell's "partnership" policy. Although they gave up the idea of self-government — owing to the changed internal power relations, this demand was advantageous for the population of African stock in the long run — the federative plan was reborn. The demand for the "creation of the new British East African dominion under European leadership" presupposed the incorporation of Tanganyika and a close co-operation with the South African Union.³⁹

The unity of the African population, complete by the end of 1947, now was also directed against the principle of the "partnership" policy. The national movement had no longer a stake in accepting the concept of the "racial communities" with equal rights. As Kenyatta put it in early 1948, "Kenya would be a paradise if the Europeans went back where they came from."⁴⁰ A new strike wave rose in Mombasa in mid-1949, and the actions of the workers were by no means restricted to demands of economic nature.⁴¹ Imprisonment of Kibachia, the leader of the strikes did not set back the workers' movement. The African Workers' Federation was dissolved, but was immediately replaced by the better organiz-

"East African Trade Union Congress." This new trade union federation represented the country's so far most progressive ideas, unified as an organization the African and Indian workers, and established close contacts with the organizations of the two other East African countries. Apart from the president Fred Kubai, the communist secretary general Makhan Singh had a considerable influence here.

The assembly of the settlers convoked to Nairobi in April 1950 was prompted — last but not least — by the growing trade union movement to see the way out in urgent assistance from North and South Rhodesia and from the South African Union.

The labour movement maintained efficient and close contacts, also in respect of the leaders, with other organizations of the national movement. Another highly important fact was that the non-worker strata of the Indian population — forming the majority and having greater authority — established closer relations with the Africans. In spring 1950 the Kenya African Union held a joint meeting of protest with the East African Indian National Congress. The attendants of the meeting gave a vote of non-confidence in respect of European leadership.⁴² The authorities arrested Makhan Singh and Kubai immediately after the meeting, and accused them of illegal organizing activity. These arrests led to a general political strike in Nairobi.⁴³

The governor did his best to put an end to the more and more evident fermentation. A decree on the banning of the Mau Mau was issued in August. Insistence on the principle of multiracialism — which in the given circumstances was the last peaceful way for the leaders of the British colonial policy — did not make possible the liquidation of all African organizations. The various organs of interest protection, resting on ethnic or regional foundations (e.g. the Merchants' and Growers' Association of the Kikuyu), Kenyatta's independent schools, and even the Kenya African Union, continued to operate. The November assembly of the KAU was marked by a spirit of further radicalization, the moderate leaders were outvoted. Although Griffith spoke in the House of Commons about a constitution for the East African colonies and their constitutional development within the Commonwealth,⁴⁴ there was no indication that all this would be realized in the foreseeable future. For the Africans multiracialism, was out of the question as an ultimate solution. Governor Mitchell's statement, which came into the open in some way, according to which the so-called learned Africans have not more attainments than European children at the age of 12,⁴⁵ whereby their participation in political leadership is not feasible, shocked the Africans and raised their suspicion. The extremist manifestations of the settlers' press, (they did not decline to the position of "a protected minority")⁴⁶ not rejected explicitly by the government further increased the tension.

Griffith's visit to the country in May, his meetings with Kenyatta and Koinange, failed to produce the expected result. The Secretary's promises would not have satisfied the national movement even if they had been fulfilled. The peasants confined to the reserves, or working at

European farms for starvation-wages, resorted to the means of individual retaliation more and more often. Mitchell's departure in June 1952 could solve nothing. The organized forces of the national movement threatened the British rule in Kenya with complete collapse. The newly appointed governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, arrived with a considerable number of British troops. On October 20, the Secretary of State for the Colonies approved the decree on the proclamation of a state of emergency.

Development and defeat of the revolutionary fight for freedom

An armed movement had become nation-wide by the end of 1952. In the beginning the leaders of the colony denied even its existence, but later, when it was no longer possible to hush it up, they tried to wipe it out by fire and sword, employing all tools of a colonial war while showering on it a multitude of accusations and slanders. Upsetting articles, studies and books were published on the torturing and extirpation of European farmer families, on barbarous customs, oaths of ghastly wording. Yet all this cannot affect our judgment about the rightfulness of this struggle, knowing the social tensions practically inconceivable in Europe, the hopeless destitution, the ravaging diseases, endless humiliations, and the ignorance, despair and primitive customs still existing after 50 years of colonial rule. The anti-imperialist struggle was doubtless rightful and just, and acted in the direction of social progress against the foreign power that hindered development.

The coming into being of the Mau Mau movement⁴⁷ is explained by Josiah Kariuki, a close collaborator of Kenyatta, like this:

"After the 1939-45 War things were changing. Our social and economic grievances were plainer to all and there were many more educated Africans who were beginning to understand that the social system was not immutable. Thousands more had recently returned from service in the King's African Rifles all over the world. The granting of Independence to India and Pakistan, the developing struggle in Ghana, and the increased publicity given to such things in newspapers and radio programmes, all contributed to the steady growth of political sensibility among the Africans in Kenya. Most of all was this happening among my own tribe, the Kikuyu.

They had long been in the van of Kenya politics; they were living in overcrowded and undeveloped Reserves, in many places with a density of well over a thousand to the square mile; they felt deep grievances over the land which had been taken from them, land without which they could have no religious or social security. When the Europeans first came to the country the Kikuyu fought under Waiyaki Hinga to preserve their lands."

He writes of the well-known process of land robbery and then continues:

"At the same time they were suffering the humiliations of the colour bar. Many Europeans refused to talk to educated Africans in any lan-

guage but their deplorably bad Swahili; old men were addressed as boys and monkeys; Africans were barred from hotels and clubs; Africans with land near European farms were not allowed to plant coffee; there was a wholesale disregard for human dignity and little respect for anyone with a black skin.⁴⁸

In fact Mau Mau was nothing else but the continuation in the armed way, the culmination of the Kenya national liberation movement. It was one of the world's most important manifestations of forces fighting against colonization.

The state of emergency proclaimed on October 20, 1952, made possible the exile of suspected persons, the prohibition of public meetings, to impose curfew, and a number of similar security measures. The arrest of the members of the Kenya African Union was started some hours after the proclamation of the state of emergency, and some hundred leaders, with Kenyatta and Oneko among them, were sent into exile at once.

The Mau Mau trial, lasting hundred days, was opened in early January 1953. The authorities were able to sentence the arrested leaders of the KAU only through false evidence for the Crown.⁴⁹ Kenyatta, and each of his five followers, were sentenced to 7 years of forced labour. The party itself was suppressed on January 8.

As happens invariably in the case of a true popular insurrection, these terroristic measures only fanned up the flames, and from early 1953 the armed resistance began to assume mass dimensions. By mid-February an army of twenty thousand, and a seven-thousand strong irregular "security formation", took up the fight against the insurgents.⁵⁰ In March the Secretary for the Colonies analyzed the situation in Kenya in the House of Commons, saying that it resembles a war rather than a state of emergency.⁵¹ The contemporary press was full of gruesome reports; figures were published about killed Africans, punitive expeditions, burned-down villages, mass banishments, overcrowded concentration camps. 7000 people were carried off during one "operation" in Nairobi. Measures taken for the deportation of tens of thousands involved confiscation of property, horrible acts of cruelty became daily routine. Yielding to the demand of the settlers, the British government sent general Tumpster, the mass murderer of Malaya, to Kenya to "restore order".⁵²

The guerilla movement grew into an all-national liberation struggle, several revolutionary centres, bases were formed, the most important one being in the Aberdare Range. The number of participants in the uprising grew rapidly; according to British data, about three hundred thousand insurgents were active in May, and one million were reported in July (In the period under survey, the population of Kenya was less than eight million.) Although nearly 90 per cent of the participants came from the related Kikuyu, Embu and Meru peoples, the "Onego Society" of the Luo, and revolutionary groups of other tribes also joined in the fight. At the same time the British succeeded in making best of the tribal differences, and most of the Masai, for example, were involved in defeating the uprising.

A united direction of the insurrection demanded considerable efforts. By the end of 1953 it was possible to unify the guerilla detachments, and this was the birth of the "African Army of Liberation". The organized guerilla warfare considerably helped the participants in becoming self-conscious, and it is a remarkable fact that the essentials of scientific socialism found their way also to this backward African country. The tremendous tasks produced outstanding military leaders, among whom Dedan Kimathi and Waruhiu Itote were the most prominent. The pseudonym used by Kimathi was "General Russia", that of Waruhiu was "General China". The saying with which Kimathi characterized the Mau Mau is typical of his views: The Mau Mau — this is the poor of Kenya and nothing more. And you cannot cure the poor with bombs and other weapons.⁵³

The government made tremendous efforts, and was not ever-scrupulous in finding the ways: they opened fire on the persons invited for peace talks, launched destructive air-raids against the bases in the Aberdare Range, drew a "hunger-zone" round them, united all East African British military forces in May 1953; a new draft constitution was prepared (the Executive Council was turned into the Council of Ministers), general pardon was proclaimed for dividing the fighters — but all this had little success.⁵⁴ By mid-1955 an army of 35 thousand men was deployed to the Aberdare Range alone, and "300–400 fighters were killed every month" according to reports. In early 1956 there were about seventy thousand people in concentration camps, with 14 000 women and 2000 children among them.

In summer 1956 the superior forces dealt a decisive blow on the insurgents in the Aberdare Range; deprived of their reserves, the exhausted, lessening troops were no longer able to hold their own. The opportunistic policy of Tom Mboya and his group, which relied exactly on the concessions enforced by the victorious struggles, detached the qualified workers from the uprising, and the nascent African middle class longed for more peaceful means. The Mau Mau movement was not able to unite all African tribes, and treated all Europeans as enemies. The Asians and Arabs were passive at best and, fearing a preponderance of Africans who made up the country's majority, made approaches to the government. The socialist camp was not able to exert decisive influence on the outcome of the liberation struggles in Trans-Saharan Africa. The efforts of the British Communist Party — formation of what was called the Kenya Committee, organization of protesting campaigns, collection of signatures — were not able to reverse British policy.⁵⁵

But whatever difficulties there existed, it was not possible to crush once for all the national liberation movement in Kenya. One of the chief reasons is the fact that the Mau Mau — despite its limitations — was expressing the interests of the entire African population, was the organic continuer of the independence aspirations dating back to 1952. We must emphasize this fact, for there is a well-known opinion according to which the Mau Mau in fact inhibited constitutional development. The circum-

stance that Jomo Kenyatta and his collaborators detached themselves from the movement in the course of their trials, while the British authorities produced a false witness for sentencing them, contributed to the spreading of this view. The detachment was legally true; Kenyatta and his group could not have been held responsible for the preparation of the Mau Mau because this was a spontaneous movement. Nevertheless, the Kenya African Union and the Mau Mau in fact grew up from the same social and political soil. This is expressed in a popular song about Kimathi (Rwimbo rwa Kimathi) that according to the chronicler „was composed in the forests and is very well known in our country.“⁵⁶ Kimathi and Kenyatta are mentioned together. In the first verse we read:

“When our Kimathi ascended
Into the mountains alone
He asked for strength and courage
To defeat the White Men”

And the sixth verse runs like this:

“Even when our hearts are troubled
Jomo will never desert us...”

And Oginga Odinga, one of the Kenya African Union's most radical leaders, said this: “It is our duty to express our gratitude to our brethren who have prepared and carried out the Mau Mau uprising.”⁵⁷

The armed uprising, which was the successor of the former liberation movement in another form, survived after its defeat for a while not only in the scattered guerilla groups, but also in the entire anticolonialist struggle which could never be annihilated. Its defeat was not a fall, it was a station. The Kenya White Man's Country legend vanished once for all. It has become an unambiguous fact that the country's principal force is the African population. British policy, appearing more elastic by now, realized this gradually and started its decolonization endeavours also in this territory. It was intended to give an ever increasing role to the “loyal” African politicians, paying less attention to the European minority. The chief lesson of the armed fight was summed up by Odinga: “Were it not for the heroism of the Mau Mau fighters, Kenya now would certainly be a second South Africa.”⁵⁸

The armed insurrection accelerated the pace of political development: the demand for independence was formulated among the Africans emphatically.

Within 24 hours after the proclamation of the state of emergency, the most important leaders of the national movement, were arrested. In such circumstances the Africans rejected the “partnership” policy radically, opposing the majority principle to it. Secretary of State for the Colonies Lyttelton went to Kenya in March 1954, and promised the introduction of a new constitution, which was soon realized. Its evident purpose was the winning over of the African petty bourgeoisie, intelligentsia, and the chiefs of minor tribes, and their separation from the supporters

of the armed uprising. But the number of loyal Africans was small. After the banning of the Kenya African Union (in July 1953), a new organization, the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions was formed in October 1953. It was headed by Tom Mboya, raised moderate demands, and its mass influence was insignificant, extending only to the urban skilled workers. But the principle of European parity, figuring in the constitution and stating a 3 : 2 : 1 ratio of the European, Asian and African communities, was not acceptable even to Mboya and his group.

It was at this time that the signs of a polarization appeared in the circles of the European minority for the first time. Its most far-sighted representatives — although an insignificant minority — believed that their acquired positions could be maintained by a cooperation with part of the Africans. In June 1954 Blundell founded the United Country Party based on the "multiracial" principle.⁵⁹ Yet even the official colonial policy itself was instrumental in isolating Blundell: the ruthless actions against the national movement in Kenya doubtlessly made the impression on the Europeans that the country's colonial status was not to be put in issue within reasonable time. This was indicated by the visit to Nairobi (October 1954) of Lennox-Boyd, after his appointment as Lyttelton's successor, in the course of which he assured the Europeans of the British government's support, and expressed his hopes for further large-scale immigrations.⁶⁰ The Coutts Report — published in January — studying the suffrage problems of Lyttelton constitution stated the participation in the elections "is not a right, but a privilege". Such participation was envisaged on the basis of required age, schooling, responsible position, and, in the case of people of Kikuyu, Embu and Meru stock, production of a Loyalty Certificate to prove trustworthiness.⁶¹

The Mau Mau uprising doubtlessly formed the principal contents of the period between 1952 and 1956, and the constitutional development planned "independently" of it resulted in no substantial step forward.

Kenya attains independence

The armed fights ceased by the end of 1956, but the way to the ultimate aim was not blocked before the national liberation movement of Kenya. Peaceful means came to the fore: parliamentary quarrels got livelier, talks, compromises came in quick succession, political parties emerged, meetings, demonstrations were common occurrences.

The internal economic-social changes of Kenya alone cannot serve as a full explanation for understanding the historical period that began in 1957. There was a seeming rapprochement between London and the forces fighting for the independence of Kenya. On the one hand, at the time of the Mau Mau uprising, the ruling circles held out the prospect of more concessions; the number of Africans on the Legislative Council was increased in 1952; a Council of Ministers was set up in 1953; a new constitution was put into force a year after, which envisaged a broadening of African representation; and, finally, a restricted franchise was granted

to the Africans in 1957. On the other hand, the most radical elements of the uprising had been destroyed, and seeing the concessions, the adherents of the compromising solution felt that they were justified by the events. But the "rapprochement" of the two antagonistic parties was only superficial. It would have been incomprehensible that British imperialism, just after a bloody victory, should have given up its positions, and that a colonial war of more than four years should only have prepared an honourable withdrawal. In essence, the forces of the Kenya independence movement survived after 1956, but British imperialism had to face a radically changed international situation.

Namely by the mid-fifties the positions of the colonial powers had been weakened all over the world, and a historical period began to evolve in which the joint forces of the socialist camp and the national liberation movements were felt also in Africa.

The disintegration of the colonial system is of course not a consequence of the victory of socialism; the former as well as the latter has come about through a sharpening of the contradictions of imperialism, although socialism organized into a world-wide system has also affected the process of disintegration. Another most important factor is the solidarity of the newly liberated countries and national movements which represented an increasing force since the convocation of the Bandung Conference in April 1955. The fact that — to quote Nehru — "more than half the world population has entered the arena of international life"⁶² has shaken entire Trans-Saharan Africa. The tempest of revolutions ravaged nearer and nearer also in space, and following the Suez adventure which ended in a humiliating defeat of the British, the most developed Trans-Saharan British colony, the Gold Coast, attained its independence on March 6, 1957, and adopted the name Ghana which recalls the past before colonization.

The foundations and the reason for the independence to be attained consisted in Kenya's above-presented economic, social and political conditions, but the victory could only be gained in this favourably changed world situation. It was in this way that a situation arose in Kenya in which the colonial rule was not stabilized after the defeat of the anti-imperialist armed struggle, and that from 1957 this struggle gathered new momentum which it was no longer possible to hold up.

In March 1957, the Africans only held 8 places of the 59 in the Legislative Council. These 8 representatives, aware of the increasing pressure by the masses, raised several demands in their talks with the Governor Baring. These demands went beyond their policy adopted till then. The unavoidable sweep of events was manifest in the fact that African leaders — members of the Legislative Council — who had been indifferent or hostile towards the Mau Mau movement — such as Ngala, Muliro and Mboya — now demanded not only an equality of races — this was emphasized before, but was not too important in its general aspects — but also universal suffrage (in colonies where the decisive majority of the native population deliberately opposes foreign rule, this demand is much

more important than anywhere else), the lifting of the state of emergency, which was the precondition for unfolding political struggles, confiscation of land not used by the European farmers, a system of equal representation, eight-form general schooling, and other progressive-minded measures. In a protest against the continued maintenance of the Lyttelton-constitution, the African representatives refused to accept ministerial posts. The British leading circles were anxious to solve the constitutional crisis as soon as possible, for fear of another upswing in mass movements. After long parley in London and then in Nairobi, the Lennox-Boyd constitution was made public. This granted further six seats to Africans in the Legislative Council, but — even together with other concessions — this proved to be no longer enough. The November 13 declaration of the African leaders stated that the new constitution is a tool for the consolidation of the colonial rule and for maintaining the rule of the white settlers.⁶³

The introduction of the new constitution in April 1958 was preceded by bloody meetings and deportations. The authorities prohibited the holding of public meetings, concentrated troops, banned the newly formed People's Party (Kiama kia Mwingi), and sent 85 of its members in exile. British imperialism tried once more to perpetuate its rule. Disregarding democratic procedural rules, legal proceedings were instituted against seven members of the Supreme Council (well known men among them were Odinga, Mboya, Muliro, Ngala). Yet the sentences passed in June already expressed the new power relations, because the accused only were ordered to pay 75 \$. British colonial policy gave up its original designs once for all, and the object in view now was to make the decolonization process as smooth as possible in order that British positions should be maintained as far as possible after the attainment of independence. In January 1959, following the London conference of the East African colonial governors, an announcement was issued in which the Secretary of State for the Colonies consented to a round-table conference about a constitution for Kenya.

* * *

Thus it was evident by now that the colonial system was living on borrowed time also in Trans-Saharan Africa. A regrouping of forces began, all were anxious to keep or get the best possible positions for the time after the inevitable change.

Decomposition started also among the settlers. The New Kenya Party was formed in April which, theoretically, should have united all races of Kenya. Its obvious purpose was to divide the Africans, and to salvage the privileged position of the Europeans at the cost of concessions. The platform included the attainment of independence by stages, but the dead-line remained in obscurity. The leader, Blundell, said that „the British government must maintain responsibility until all races are prepared... for accepting a parliamentary system suitable for Kenya.“⁶⁴ It is a remarkable fact that while the African independence movement

was not able to decide how to proceed, Blundell and his group considered it necessary to propagate the capitalist way with full determination; they opposed the expropriation or collectivization of land, industries or trade.⁶⁵ They tried to make their principles accepted by saying that they wanted to grant the right of buying land at White Highland also for Africans. As a consequence of the intensified class antagonism, the policy of co-operation with the Africans — Blundellism — was not able to secure an important base for itself on either side.

A considerable proportion of the ruling class of European stock opposed any kind of independence. It appeared that, in the last analysis, the British government had identified itself with the long-term Africa policy of the home monopoly-capitalist groups. This policy — generally defined as the policy of neocolonialism — understood the necessity of liquidating the colonial system, but was not willing to sacrifice to a few thousand settlers the possibility of its future influence, its international prestige. The European minority got aware of this changed situation with despair. Their mood is expressed in a letter written to the *Times* by Huxley and Perham in which they say that the British government had ever since 1903 lured the settlers to go to Kenya, that these settlers later produced 80% of the country's exports, and that now they are going to lose everything, but do not resort to violence: "it is fortunate for Britain and for the Africans in Kenya that the Europeans there have neither the strength nor the inclination to express their feelings in this way."⁶⁶ Yet in August 1959 they united forces in the racist United Party which was formed from the Progressive Local Government Party and the extreme right "ultras" of Briggs. They demanded in their programme continued control by the British government for a long time to come, and a segregated development of races.

After the lifting of the state of emergency, the majority of the Europeans supported "The Kenya Coalition". This party, founded in early 1960, substantially adopted in a covert form the extreme right conception of the Briggs group. They wanted to unite all European groups. The leader of the party was Sir Ferdinand Cavandish-Bentinck, an owner of big estates.

The Asians with their special class background had established their organizations long ago. Between the two world wars the Kenya Indian Congress was actively fighting against the rule of the white settlers and against racial discrimination. Its progressive character increased from 1945: they began to co-operate with the Kenya African Union, but at the time of the Mau Mau movement, afraid of losing their positions, they intensified relations with the government. From 1959, when the large-scale polarization process was gaining strength, the members joined partly the "liberal" Blundellists, partly the Kenya National Party which was also "multiracial" but was under African control. It was the party of the middle class of African stock.

Part of the Asians, being aware of realities, took a stand for the immediate granting of independence, but were anxious to preserve their

former special and isolated position also in the new African state. Headed by Chanan Singh, the Kenya Freedom Party was formed in February 1960. They considered that if they admit the Asians, they, will play a positive role in the new society of East Africa.⁶⁷

The Africans created their national organization, the Kenya African Union, as early as 1943, but under the pressure of persecution this party collapsed at the time of the insurrection. The first organization to emerge in 1956 was the Popular Convention Party of the trade union leader Tom Mboya. In 1959 the general radicalization and the favourable turn in the international situation made it possible to create a party which combined all strata and tendencies of the Africans (ranging from Mboya to Odinga who had just returned from Peking). This was the Kenya Independence Movement (KIM) which, after its merger with the aforesaid Kenya National Party, assumed its final form and was named the Kenya African National Union (KANU). As heir of old Kikuyu organizations, it operated as the country's largest and most influential party. Although there were various elements in its ranks, it was — as a consequence of the general class conditions of the Africans — a revolutionary organization which demanded the granting of independence immediately, and the solution of the land problem. Its programme included the demand for stopping further European immigrations, liquidation of racial discrimination, and the release of Kenyatta.

The united trade union of the workers of Kenya, the Kenya Federation of Labour, which at the time of the insurrection followed no clear-cut policy and concerned itself solely with economic problems, came into the limelight again. The workers of Nairobi played an important role on October 20, 1959, when, following a powerful mass demonstration, the six arrested leaders of the Kenya Independence Movement were released. The November strike of the railwaymen had 20 000 participants, and was of a pronounced political nature, reflecting again a radical role of Mboya in the KIM. The rapid growth of self-consciousness appears from the fact that in March 1960 the construction workers of the military base of Kahawa demanded the liquidation of bases in the course of organized strike movements.

The British government began to employ the policy of "evasive actions" with the intention that independence should come from the government, by preserving a number of privileges of course. The state of emergency, which had existed from October 20, 1952, was ended on January 12, 1960.

Not a week had passed since emergency was lifted, when on January 18, 1960, another round-table conference was opened in London to discuss the constitutional problems of Kenya. The African representatives brought with them the mood of the radical and well-organized masses, voiced the slogan "one man — one vote", demanded responsible government made up of Africans, immediate independence, democratic liberties such as freedom of speech and assembly, an agrarian reform, the release of Kenyatta, and the liquidation of foreign bases. On the day when th

conference was opened, they gave a statement to the press, in which as the representatives of the African population of Kenya, declared categorically that their country was now ready to assume the responsibility involved in self-government.⁶⁸

The British government had to make several concessions. Of the 53 elected members of the Legislative Council, only 10 were Europeans by now, and at least four of the 12 members of the Council of Ministers had to be Africans; but the many promises to be fulfilled in the future, which kept silent about self-government, did not satisfy the African leaders of Kenya, and particularly not the masses. As a disgrace to the long colonial rule, the conditions of suffrage (age limit of 21 years, literacy, 50 pounds sterling annual income) disfranchised 4 million and a half of the 6 million voters. The right of the Governor to revise any decision continued to be in force. The delegation returning home in late February was received by a crowd of 15 000 people in Nairobi, and a protesting resolution was adopted.

The then prevailing mood is well expressed by the fact that in March 1960 the exiled Kenyatta was elected president of the newly formed Kenya African National Union. The failure of the London conference led to a forging ahead of the leftist, radical elements.⁶⁹ The right wing led by Mboya was pushed back in 1961. The KANU Manifesto published in Cairo emphasized that "the principal aim of KANU as a national movement is the immediate attainment of independence. . . KANU holds that the imperialists never distribute independence from a silver tray." The gaining ground of the left wing resulted in a progressive programme also for the period following victory: "A poorly developed country like ours has no choice but to go the way of a planned economy. . ."⁷⁰

The prevalence of the left wing in the KANU was an opportunity for the British government and the settlers to detach part of the Africans. The Kenya African Democratic Union was formed for this purpose in July 1960, mainly of the members of the preceding Kenya National Party. Formally it presented itself as the protector of the small tribes, trying to set them against the Kikuyu and the Luo. The Kalenji, Masai and Somali gave up their former separate organizations (Kalenjin Political Alliance, Masai United Front, etc.), but the KADU's political character was indicated mainly by the large number of rightist KANU dissenters. The party headed by Muliro and then by Ngala was for federalism which in itself weakened the anti-imperialist forces. They wanted to get a federal constitution which recognizes the regional governments (*majimbo*). Their platform included the demand for raising living standards and for industrialization, the demand for democratic liberties and eight-form schooling. They were clearly for the multi-party system. KADU wanted to distribute to the Africans only the uncultivated areas. This formulation of the land question — Kenya's gravest problem — had also an exposing effect. At a later time KADU was given 25 000 pounds sterling by the Europeans.⁷¹

Actual power relations were illustrated by the elections to the Legislative Assembly in February 1961. The sweeping force of the liberation movement was manifest in the circumstance that the KANU scored 467 000 votes, while the KADU, backed by the government and the small tribes, got only 142 000.

Yet it was the representatives of the KADU that got members of the government because KANU withdrew until Kenyatta's release. As a result of an immense mass support, this took place in July, and Kenyatta took the chair of the party in October.

The constitution of 1962 was intended for strengthening the supporters of federalism; according to observers the situation in Kenya began to resemble that of the Congo, i.e. the forces of neocolonialism launched an increasing attack. And it was here that the role of rich fighting experience and of an organized party was manifest: Kenya was able to avoid the fate of the Congo. The KANU was victorious in the elections of May 1963, and Jomo Kenyatta was elected to the office of the first president of the state on June 1. The new government immediately demanded a revision of the constitution and the evacuation of foreign troops. A resolution was passed on the "building of a democratic, socialist Kenya" (true, every group interpreted this differently), and the programme of land redistribution was published. The uncertainty in respect of the further steps to be taken appears from the fact that they were not able to decide whether land should be in private or co-operative ownership. In the field of foreign policy, a stand was taken for establishing good relations with all countries, and a delegation was sent to the Soviet Union in November.

The date of attaining independence was made public after the May elections. Kenya, which had fought one of Africa's most stubborn and desperate struggles against British imperialism which was particularly strong here, was among the last to attain independence on December 12, 1963. Long-desired "uhuru" (freedom) was born at last.

After a colonial past of more than half a century, Kenya joined the ranks of independent countries with the heritage of all colonial burdens.

Eye-witnesses say that at the independence celebrations in Nairobi "the representatives of Britain behaved as if their country had prepared Kenya for independence from the beginning, and tried to give the impression as if they were gladder of this independence than the people of Kenya itself."²

NOTES

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 - ⁵² Хазанов, А. М. op. cit. стр. 134.
- The Times, March 28, 1953.
- The Times, Daily Worker March to June 1953.
- Daily Worker, December 10, 1953.

- ⁵⁶ Kariuki, J.: op. cit. p. 122.
- ⁵⁷ Moscow: World Congress on Disarmament and Peace, July, 1962. Quoted by Хазанов, А. М. op. cit. p. 150.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Segal, R.: Political Africa. A Who's Who of Personalities and Parties, London, 1961, p. 348.
- ⁶⁰ Bennett: op. cit. p. 138.
- ⁶¹ Bennett: op. cit. p. 139.
- ⁶² Quoted by Tyulpanov, Sz. I.: Az imperialista gyarmati rendszer és felbomlása (The Imperialist Colonial System and its Disintegration) Budapest, 1961. p. 220.
- ⁶³ The Times, November 14, 1957.
- ⁶⁴ A Monthly Survey of Commonwealth and Colonial Affairs, 1959.
- ⁶⁵ Segal, R.: op. cit. p. 352.
- ⁶⁶ Huxley, E.: White Man's Country, vol. II, London, pp. 278–281.
- ⁶⁷ Ghai Dharam P.: Portrait of a Minority. Asians in East Africa. Oxford, 1965. p. 151.
- ⁶⁸ The Times, January 18, 1960.
- ⁶⁹ It determined the further course of Kenya for two years after the attainment of independence.
- ⁷⁰ Manifesto Cairo, 1961, quoted by Хазанов, А. М. op. cit. стр. 184.
- ⁷¹ Томилин, Ю.: Восточная Африка выбирает путь. „Международная Жизнь”, 1964/1.
- ⁷² Кудрявцев, Кения на острие африканских проблем грабежа. „Международная Жизнь”, 1964/2.